

REMARKS

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 24 20 329, hereinafter DE'329 taken in view of Henley (U.S. Patent No. 3,475,254) or the Admitted Prior Art, hereinafter APA. In response, Applicants amended independent claim 1 to clarify that each of the holding members has a continuous portion, which is connected by a pair of radially extending portions to a pair of holding surfaces, and respectfully traverse the rejection.

The Office Action asserts that DE'329 discloses and shows in FIG. 2 a transfer apparatus as the carrying ring 7 for a belt tread assembly. It is further asserted that the transfer apparatus transfers a belt tread assembly to a carcass being manufactured after the collapse of the belt drum 5. Seals 35 of DE'329 are asserted as corresponding to the divided holding surfaces of the present invention. However, the structure of the present invention is different from that of FIG. 2 of DE'329, as now recited in the amended claims.

More specifically, the present invention now clarifies the structure of the transfer apparatus 1 shown in FIG. 3 of the present Application. Each of the holding members has a continuous portion 7, which is connected by a pair of radially extending portions to a pair of holding surfaces 8a, 8b separated from each other in the width direction W_2 of the belt tread assembly 21. Applicants respectfully submit that DE'329 fails to disclose or suggest a pair of radially extending portions that connect the holding member to the holding surfaces. DE'329 merely shows seals 35 directly connected to segments 34. However, no radially extending portions are provided.

The structure of the present invention in which the holding members have a continuous portion connected by a pair of radially extending portions to the holding surfaces is advantageously suitable for pressure-bonding the belt tread assembly to the primary green tire in a state where the transfer apparatus allows a center portion of the belt assembly to swell while holding both sides of the belt tread assembly.

Henley and the AAPA are merely cited for forming the primary green tire carcass, and bonding to the tread when the carcass is implanted in a toroidal shape. However, neither Henley nor the AAPA disclose or suggest a structure wherein the holding members have a continuous portion connected to a pair of holding surfaces by the pair of radially extending portions. Thus, any combination of these references with DE'329 fails to disclose or suggest this feature. For this reason, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over DE'329. In response, Applicants amended claim 8 similar to claim 1, and respectfully traverse the rejection for the reasons recited above with respect to the §103(a) rejection of claim 1.

As discussed above, DE'329 fails to disclose or suggest a pair of radially extending portions. Accordingly, since a feature is lacking from DE'329, withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection, or in the alternative, the §103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,
GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

July 24, 2009
300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 360-0080
Customer No. 24978

By


Joseph P. Fox, Reg. No. 41,760

P:\DOCS\4386\75053\EU8171.DOC